

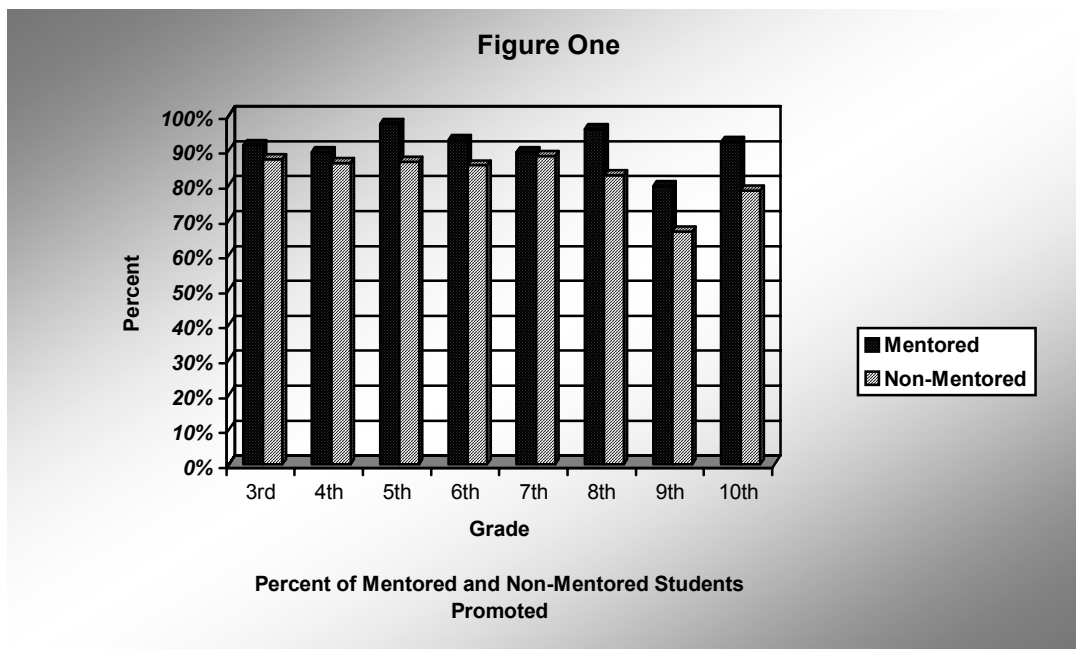
Preliminary Synopsis of First Year Mentoring Mini-Study

This document has been created as part of a first year preliminary analysis of the impact of selected mentoring programs in Florida. Three programs that receive legislative funding – Take Stock in Children, HOSTS, and Big Brothers Big Sisters – have been examined, to explore the overall impact of mentoring. Please consider the caveats presented within the Conclusions section on pages 3 and 4 when making interpretations of the data.

Using information gathered from the Department of Education's EIAS (Education Information and Accountability Services) database, comparisons were made between students in specific schools who had been in one of the three above-noted mentoring programs, and those who had not been mentored. Since this was the first year of information collection, there were several problems with the data resources. Information presented herein represents students in 9 school districts across the state. Additionally, each of these schools had been ranked as a "D" or "F" school for the 2000-2001 School Year. This limitation on numbers of low-achieving schools reduced information available for this supplemental report downward from the original report's exploration of 54 school districts. Overall, these data represent information for 7,977 mentored students and 39,023 non-mentored students.

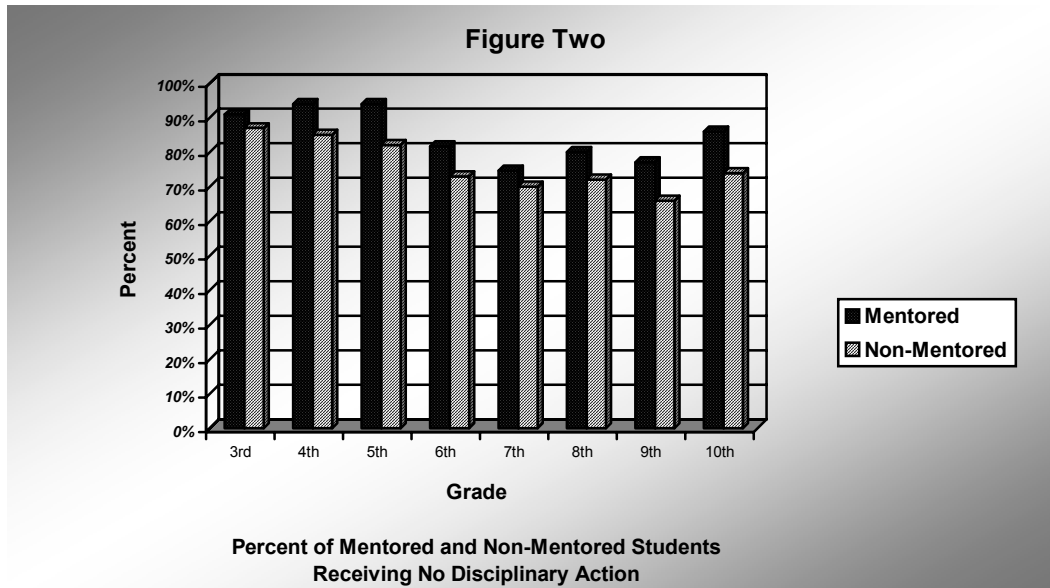
PROMOTION

Readers can observe that mentored students were promoted at a greater rate than those who were non-mentored, at every grade level. For grades 5, 6, 8, and 10 there was more than a 10% difference between the two groups, with mentored students passing more than 90% of the time. Overall, mentored students consistently had a higher promotion rate than the non-mentored students. See Figure One below. Note too, that there are five dimensions possible within the promotion category: Promoted without meeting levels of performance; Not Enrolled; Promoted/Graduated/Completed; Retained at end of year; or Promotion status not applicable. The values shown in Figure One for Promotion include both promoted without meeting performance levels and regular promotion.



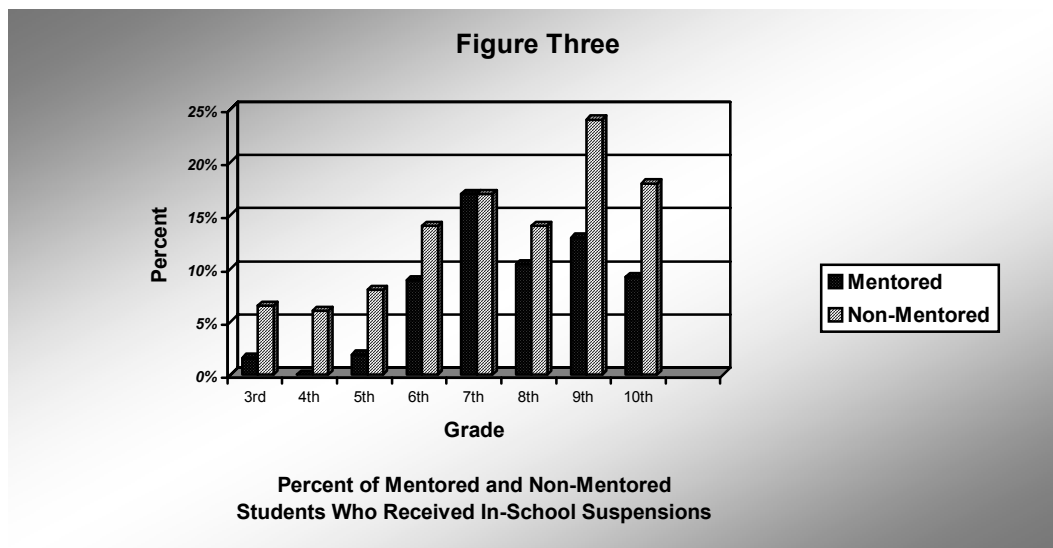
DISCIPLINARY ACTION

One of the common reasons children become referred to a mentoring program is that they have more than a usual frequency of disciplinary referrals made within school based upon their actions. As Figure Two shows, at all grade levels, these mentored students had a consistently better rate of no disciplinary actions (behavioral referrals) made against them than did non-mentored students. While the middle school years indicate that 20-25% of the mentored students did receive some form of referral, so too did non-mentored students, and at a higher rate. By high school, referral rates began diminishing again.



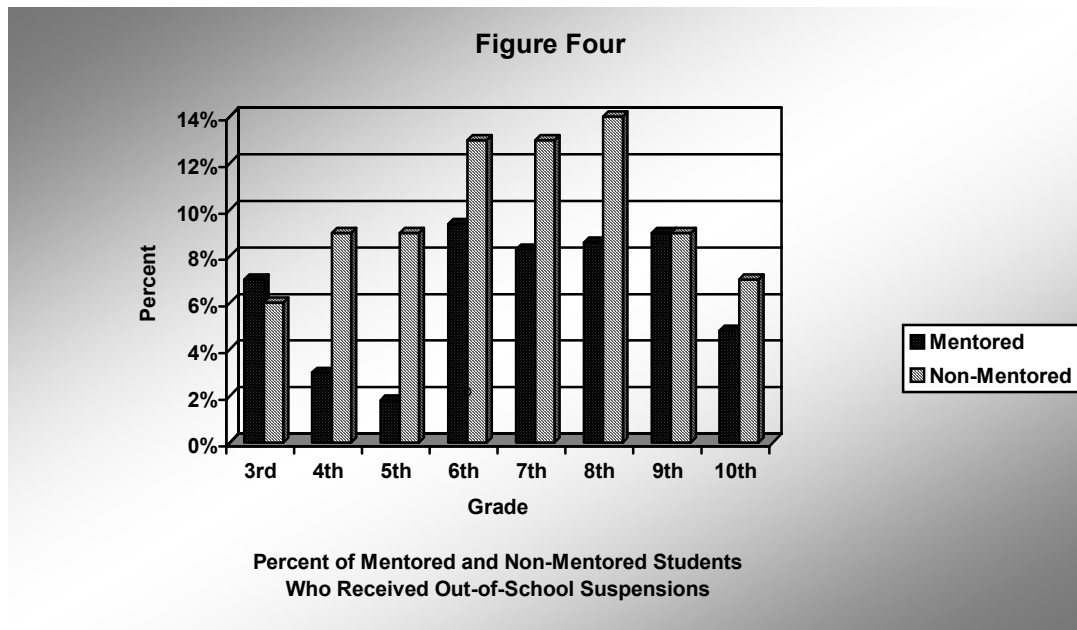
SUSPENSIONS

Elementary school mentored students had almost no In-School Suspensions., while non-mentored students were 5-8% suspended. By middle school, students were suspended slightly more often, with mentored students at the same rate as non-mentored in 7th grade. In high



school, non-mentored students in-school suspension rates soar, while mentored students stay at about the same rate, thus becoming suspended only half as frequently as their non-mentored counterparts.

Out-Of-School Suspensions varied greatly. For the most part, the mentored students received a lower percentage of out-of-school suspensions than did non-mentored students. While the differences were small in actual numbers, mentored students received more out-of-school suspensions for grade 3. In all other cases, the mentored students were the same or lower in suspension rates.



CONCLUSIONS

Readers are cautioned to not grasp for conclusions with this information as the data do not represent a statistically representative sample for neither mentored nor non-mentored students. In observing the figures caution should be exercised at two levels. The non-mentored population is more than four times larger than the mentored group in size – yet neither are representative of the total school district array of students. Nor, are the mentored and non-mentored students necessarily subsets of the same group of students. Many of the mentored students were specifically identified to participate in a mentoring program because of unique needs they exhibited in school. Each of the mentored students can be considered an “at-risk” student.

Please note also that the values on the charts themselves change along the vertical axis regarding the percents of responses. These numbers vary and are not consistent across figures. Nonetheless, these data do provide a first glimpse of trends possible to consider in the future as more sophisticated data collection for mentored youth becomes available within Florida.

A variety of behavioral indicators are explored with these two groups. As the beginning results of a three-year study, much has yet to be learned. Information has been presented for promotion rate, in-school suspensions out-of-school suspensions, and for those students who had no disciplinary action taken against them during the 2000-2001 school year. Initially, the research also intended to obtain and compare student FCAT scores as well as these behavioral measures. However, the Student Assessment database is a separate set of files from the EIAS database, and the student test information had a substantial proportion of duplicated student records. In fact, for this non-mentored group of students, more than 100,000 records existed within the assessment database. The sheer mass of reviewing and matching these records was too great a task during this preliminary year of activities. Additionally, complete records for a sufficient number of students within the two groups (mentored and non-mentored) were not available. The nature of these “D” or “F” schools is a pre-selection of the “worst” schools, those schools functioning at the extreme low end of the distribution curve for all schools in the state. Knowing that many of the students in both groups are at the statistical “tails” of the distribution sets up conditions whereby data interpretation and possible generalizations are precarious. Better, more interpretable information will be forthcoming in subsequent years as both the FCAT administrative procedures and the tagging of mentored student records within the EIAS database become more able interact with one another.